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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 00279 111507Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5088

S E C R E T TEHRAN 0279

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PERSONAL FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, IR
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CHANGE IN IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

REF: TEHRAN 12570

1. IN MEETING JANUARY 11 WITH DEFREP VON MARBOD, SHAH LAID EVEN STRONGER EMPHASIS THAN REPORTED REFTEL ON EFFECT REDUCED OIL LIFTINGS MAY HAVE ON IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY. REPEATEDLY DURING CONVERSATION, SHAH EMPHASIZED WITH GREAT SERIOUSNESS THAT USG WAS FORCING A CHANGE IN IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY. INTERESTS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM WERE THREATENING IRAN'S FUTURE. "SOME SAY, BUT I DO NOT SAY, THAT USG PREOCCUPATION WITH DETENTE IS LEADING AMERICANS TO WEAKEN IRAN." SHAH FELT THAT EFFECT OF REDUCED OIL LIFTINGS AND INFLATION IN PRICE OF MAJOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT WOULD LEAVE IRAN WITH A MILITARY FORCE THAT WAS NOT VIABLE.

2. IF U.S. DID NOT BUY OIL IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES FROM IRAN, SHAH SAID, GOI WOULD BE FORCED TO SELL OIL TO THE EAST. "WE CANNOT COMMIT SUICIDE." IRAN MUST HAVE MEANS TO CONDUCT A RATIONAL AND EFFECTIVE FOREIGN POLICY. WHEN MR. VON MARBOD SPOKE OF THE LACK OF LEVERAGE THAT USG HAS ON OIL COMPANIES, SHAH PROPOSED THAT USG BUY OIL DIRECTLY FOR ITS OWN ACCOUNT. "WHAT WILL YOU DO IF THERE IS A FUTURE EMBARGO? YOU WILL HAVE TO COME TO US."
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2. DO YOU WANT A STRONG ALLY? SHAH ASKED RHETORICALLY.
IN A SITUATION SUCH AS ANGOLA WHEN USG WAS UNABLE TO ACT,
A STRONG REGIONAL STATE SUCH AS IRAN COULD RENDER IMPORTANT
ASSISTANCE. WITH AWACS AND IBEX PROGRAM IRAN WOULD BE ABLE
TO PROJECT ITS POWER AND INFLUENCE INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN.
THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY IN THE INTEREST OF THE USG. WHILE USG
WAS NOW POWERLESS TO ACT IN ANGOLA, SOVIETS WERE ESTABLISH-
ING EAST-WEST CORRIDOR FROM ANGOLA TO SOMALIA. IRAN WOULD
HAVE TO CANCEL SPRUANCE SHIPS AND POSSIBLE OTHER SYSTEMS
DESPITE CONTRACT TERMINATION CHARGES.

4. AT ONE POINT DURING CONVERSATION, WHICH WAS CONDUCTED
TOTALLY WITHOUT HUMOR, SHAH ASSERTED THAT SOME IRANIANS FELT
THAT THEY WERE BEING CHEATED BY USG IN DEFENSE PROCUREMENT
BUSINESS. HE REFERRED TO PROBLEM OF GRUMMAN AGENTS AND
STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT U.S. HAD BEEN REMISS IN PREVENTING
GRUMMAN FROM USING AGENTS. WITH REFERENCE TO RECENT
DISMISSAL OF IIN ADMIRALS, SHAH SIAD THAT "HEADS HAVE
ROLLED AND WILL ROLL IN THE FUTURE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"
CLEARLY, HE THINKS USG HAS RESPONSIBILITY TO
HELP IRAN IN ITS CURRENT DIFFICULTIES WITH GRUMMAN AND
OTHER AMERICAN COMPANIES.

5. COMMENT: APPRECIATE THAT FOREGOING IS SOMEWHAT
RAMBLING PRESENTATION OF SHAH'S VIEWS, BUT BELIEVE THAT
THIS MESSAGE WILL ILLUSTRATE SERIOUSNESS OF HIS CONCERNS,
AND GROWING DIFFICULTIES WE CAN EXPECT IN OUR DEALINGS
WITH HIM.

6. DEFREP IS RETURNING TO U.S. JANUARY 12 AND WILL BRIEF
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PERSONALLY ON HIS AUDIENCE. WE ARE
LIMITING DISTRUBUTION OF THIS MESSAGE FOR SECURITY
REASONS.
HELMS

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